

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Reconsideration by the Examiner is respectfully requested in view of the foregoing amendments and the remarks which follow.

Regarding the rejection of claim 12 under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, Applicant respectfully points out the claim 12 does not recite a heating step. The recited temperatures of 15 to 20°C are typical ambient temperature conditions. The claim simply specifies that the amount of pressure to be applied is a function of the temperature conditions and the pressure increases with increasing temperature. This is clearly described in the specification at the bottom of page 6. Accordingly reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection is solicited.

Amended independent claim 18 now recites a method for manufacturing a building element based on plaster, the method comprising preparing a mixture of plaster, water and filler, placing the mixture in a mold, applying a pressing to the mixture in the mold to obtain the building element, wherein the pressure applied to the mixture in the mold and the quantity of water in the mixture are sufficiently high to prevent the plaster crystallization under pressure in the mixture and wherein the said pressure is applied to the mixture in the mold during 30 seconds to 45 seconds, then unmolding the building element and allowing the plaster in the mixture to crystallize outside the mold. The pressure duration is mentioned in the specification, on page 10, lines 3-10, and is equal to the duration of steps 30 and 32.

This invention is neither disclosed nor suggested by the cited prior documents. Brouard teaches a method for preparing a building element from a mixture of plaster, water and filler, this method comprising placing a mixture in the mold, slowly compressing the mixture in the mold during a period of time which is sufficient for obtaining hydration under pressure of the plaster in the mold and densification of its crystal lattice, and then unmolding the building element.

The specification indicates, as noted by the Examiner, that the pressure is applied to the mixture in the mold for a length of time sufficient for the plaster to be hydrated to about 70%-90% inside the mold, this length of time lying in the range about 1.5 minutes to about 5 minutes, depending on the temperature and of the type and quantity of plaster used (col. 6, lines 43-49).

The present invention differs from Brouard at least in that:

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- it prevents the hydration of the plaster under pressure in the mold, whereas Brouard hydrates the plaster under pressure in the mold (to 70%-90% of the complete hydration),

- the pressure is applied to the mixture in the mold during 30 seconds to 45 seconds, whereas Brouard applies the pressure to the mixture in the mold during 1.5 to about 5 minutes.

Randel et al. do not disclose a method for preparing a building element. They disclose a method for manufacturing a high strength calcined gypsum. They have found that calcined gypsum produced by steam having a pressure of 15 pounds to 50 pounds gauge and a temperature of 225-300°F, is higher in strength than the maximum strength obtained from ordinary calcined gypsum (page 3, lines 88-94). They also indicate that this particular calcined gypsum requires less than 50 percent water to bring the mix to pouring consistency (page 3, lines 17-21) and that when molded at 4000psi, the cast have an absorption of only 3.2%. However, Randel et al. are totally silent on the duration of the pressure application: 1 second, 1 minute or 1 hour ? Randel et al. are also totally silent on the means that should be used to prevent the plaster crystallization under pressure in a mold.

When Brouard and Randel et al. are considered in view of each other, they only teach to one skilled in the art that the building element made by Brouard could perhaps have a higher strength if it is manufactured with the calcined gypsum disclosed by Randel et al. However, they fail to disclose that the plaster crystallization can be prevented under pressure in a mold, and that the pressure is applied to the mixture in the mold during 30 seconds to 45 seconds.

Revard is not more pertinent than Brouard and Randel et al. and does not disclose the duration during which a pressure is applied to a mixture of plaster and water in a mold.

For the foregoing reasons, it should be evident that the invention of amended claim 18 is patentable over the cited prior art.

It is not believed that extensions of time or fees for net addition of claims are required, beyond those that may otherwise be provided for in documents accompanying this paper. However, in the event that additional extensions of time are necessary to allow consideration of this paper, such extensions are hereby petitioned under 37 CFR § 1.136(a), and any fee required therefor (including fees for net addition of claims) is hereby authorized to be charged to Deposit Account No. 16-0605.

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Respectfully submitted,

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